

Joint Meeting
Budget Committee/Town Council/School Committee
7 p.m. Thursday, 08 January 2009
Tiverton High School Library

Budget Committee members attending: Alex Cote, Art Moeller, Ray Joubert, Sanford Mantell, Rob Coulter, Tom Parker, Dave Perry, Cynthia Nebergall, Dan Rapoza, and Chairman Jeff Caron. Joe Bento was absent.

Town Council President Don Bollin opened discussion of the first matter on the Agenda, "Disposition of Property." School Superintendent Rearick recommended returning the unused school buildings to the Town. Mr. Bollin asked Mr. Rearick about the capacity, and present capacity usage, of the school buildings. Leonard Wright, School Committee member, said he had spoken with the Little Compton School Superintendent about leasing the Tiverton school buildings to Little Compton.

Mr. Bollin opened discussion of the second matter on the Agenda, "Budget Strategies" stating "government has nothing to give but that which it takes from someone else;" that there is a current large shortfall in aid from the State; and there will likely be a large shortfall next year. Discussion ensued. Superintendent Rearick said the schools needed legislative relief from State mandates; that he was not certain the cuts in State aid applied to the schools as well as municipal operations. Louise Durfee, Town Council member, requested that Superintendent Rearick and Town Administrator Jim Goncalo meet soon and often to determine where spending cuts may be made, irrespective of State mandates relief from which may take more time than is available. Ray Joubert asked Treasurer Phil DeMattia whether current tax collections were parallel to projections and Mr. DeMattia answered that in general they were. Jeff Caron presented a chart showing that the Town tax levy has increased 70% in seven years, from \$17 million to \$29 million. Mr. Caron said that the increase last year of approximately 9.65% was equivalent to the sum of the 5% increase cap applicable in the current year and the 4.75% increase cap applicable in the forthcoming year so that, in effect, the Town has already realized the increase in tax revenue which should not have been realized until next year. Mr. Caron then requested

the School Committee seek relief from RIGL Title 16, Chapter 16-7, Section 16-7-23 which requires that "Each community shall contribute local funds to its school committee in an amount not less than its local contribution for schools in the previous fiscal year." Discussion ensued regarding the school bond debt and permanent financing thereof.

Mr. Bollin turned to the third agenda item "Collective Bargaining" and said that in his view collective bargaining discussions should take place in meetings closed to the public. Mr. Bollin said that he would call and notice a meeting of the Town Council to discuss collective bargaining, in executive session; that he would invite the members of the Budget Committee and the School Committee and the Town Treasurer to that closed meeting; and that he intended to have that meeting next Thursday, 15 January, as Thursday evenings are the regular meeting time of the Budget Committee.

Mr. Bollin then opened discussion of the fourth agenda item "Potential Reduction of State Aid." Mr. Caron stated that the May 2009 FTM docket should have an additional column reflecting the FY09 appropriation less an amount equal to the reduction in state aid, and that this form of the docket would present factual continuity between the fiscal year 2009 budget and the fiscal year 2010 budget.

The meeting adjourned at 9p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia Nebergall
Secretary, Budget Committee

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